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AUTHOR Kuhlwein, Wolfgang
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ABSTRACT

The French and English terms for characteristics of human beauty are compared and contrasted from the perspective of how sociosemiotic factors influence the ways different speech communities deal with reality. First, background and theoretical approaches to sociosemiotically based research are discussed. The adjectives examined are listed and the semiotically relevant criteria by which the various terms are assigned to individuals are outlined. The ways in which French and British people apply the criteria are examined and compared. These parameters of beauty are considered: clothing; body; constitution (refined vs. coarse features); approximation of perfection in appearance; harmony of appearance; the degree to which one looks one's age; vanity (intention to impress by good appearance); naturalness; sex-typicity; warm-heartedness; and seriousness (earnest vs. cheerful or serene). An overall hierarchy of sociosemiotic properties for the evocation of adjectives of beauty is charted. It is concluded that this information can be helpful in making distinctions between languages, and particularly in avoiding false or misleading equivalences. A brief bibliography is included. (MSE)

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A SOCIOSEMIOTIC VIEW OF THE GRASP OF LANGUAGE AT REALITY: THE LEXICAL FIELD 'AESTHETIC JUDGEMENT'

WOLFGANG KOHLWEIN
University of Trier
Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg

The research aim is the elucidation of the lexical field 'Aesthetic Judgement' ('beauty' of human beings) in English and French. As opposed to a merely systemic linguistic or an exclusively psycho-linguistic research method for cross-cultural studies, a sociosemiotic view is developed, which affects both perceptual strategies concerning the research objects, and the research method. It complies with a conception of linguistics which integrates what is often called 'applied' linguistics and theoretical linguistics on the basis of an encompassing normative philosophy of science.

1. Introduction: Object, Method, Aim

On the one hand, our object of research is old and well-known: a lexical field, a set of 'synonyms', the French and English terms for aesthetic judgement, for 'beauty'. For reasons of space we restrict our investigation to beauty as assigned to human beings.

On the other hand, the angle under which we look at our object of research is not a traditional one but rather a cross-language sociosemiotic view. What is that? It refers to the determining impact which sociosemiotic factors exert upon the ways in which different languages, different speech-communities, cope with reality respectively a part of reality, here 'beauty'.

Tracing the grasp of languages at reality down to sociosemiotic properties means going beyond the semantically defined referential axis word/thing when constituting our object of research. This shift will have to affect our research methodology correspondingly, to insure adequacy. We admit to adhere to a neo-Kantian philosophical position: it is one's point-of-view that determines what one can see, it is one's theoretical and methodological approach that determines what one's object of research reveals.

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Here we shall refrain from going deeper into the question as to what extent different points of view respectively different research methods affect not only one's concept of reality ('Weltbild') but also reality itself (Kuhn 1976: 49ff.; 1977). Whether light presents itself as material, ie. as corpuscles, or whether it presents itself as immaterial, ie. as a wave, entirely depends on the respective theory and method of investigation applied. Another example, perhaps better known among linguists: whether language presents itself as ergon or as energeia depends on whether we apply structural-taxonomic or generative approaches to its investigation.

As a consequence, applying a sociosemiotic view to the analysis of a facet of the relationship between languages and reality will not merely be a decision of method but will in the first instance exert constitutive power on the object of research.

The sociosemiotic view will also determine the 'ultimate' research aims, the finalizations, to which the results of the investigation can be put.

2. 'Applied Linguistics', 'Theoretical Linguistics', and the Sociosemiotic View

2.1. Speaking of 'ultimate' research aims presupposes a grading/stageing of aims. What can be considered a legitimate research aim of language study depends on the kind of philosophy of science with which one is willing to side. Is it a descriptive one or a normative one? (As for the bearing of this distinction on linguistic research, cf. Kühlwein 1987a includes references to the basic philosophical literature.) The decision between descriptive and normative philosophy of science in turn determines one's basic understanding of language study as to the relationship between what is usually called theoretical linguistics (TL) and what has become to be called applied linguistics (AL). In Kühlwein 1987a (Chs. I and II) we discussed the major current conceptions of this relationship.

- There is the paradigmatic conception. Higher 'applied' linguistic institutions/departments are established next to the traditionally existing (theoretical) linguistic/philological ones for the purpose of complying with socially relevant desiderata like language education, translating and interpreting etc. Without bothering about philosophy of science the mere tangibility of the goal-orientedness of what is done in these institutions/centres is frequently taken for sufficent justification for the use of

the label 'applied linguistics' - though they usually cover a little fraction of the large multi-faceted field of applied linguistics only.

This paradigmatic conception does not contribute towards elucidating the relationship between TL and AL.

- There is the inclusive conception. There is an increasing tendency within a fair number of (theoretical) linguistic departments/congresses towards including a wide range of applied linguistic fields/sections, in particular distinctly interdisciplinary ones, like psycho-, socio-, neurolinguistics.

All too frequently, however, this inclusive relationship turns out to be rather formaliter than materialiter. The encompassing framework is rarely thematized, nor are the manifold feedback relations between TL and AL.

- There is the derivative conception. It restricts TL to the activity of forming general linguistic theories and methods and would designate the applications of these general linguistic theories and methods to the analysis of specific languages as 'applied linguistics', eg. the description of the Spanish phonemic system ('AL') as derived from general phonemic theory ('TL').

This conception of the relationship between TL and AL nicely illustrates the problematicity of goal-orientedness as the constitutive criterion for AL (vs. TL). Of course, the analysis of the Spanish phoneme system constitutes a legitimate linguistic research goal - justified by strength of a descriptive philosophy of science. Nevertheless most linguists would hesitate calling this analysis 'applied'. Obviously AL reaches beyond such research aims which merely rest on the justificatory power of a descriptive philosophy of science. AL rather seems to base its research aims on the legitimizing power of a normative philosophy of science, which yields what we called 'ultimate' research aims above. As a consequence we refute the distinction which is often rashly drawn by applied linguists: AL = goal-oriented vs. TL = not goal-oriented. It is not a matter of goal-orientedness. Both AL and TL are, of course, goal-oriented. What, actually, differs, is the justificatory basis of the goals, and its scope.

- There is the adversary conception. It equates 'linguistics' with theory ('linguistics proper'), and AL with practice ('linguistics improper'!), and opposes both to each other. The seemingly clear distinction between 'pure science' and 'technology', between the descriptions of nature and the uses to which these descriptions are put, provided the (false!) analogy.

All four conceptions share one feature: the relationship between TL and AL is regarded as non-convergent.

We oppose an intergral conception of the relationship between TL and AL

- which will do justice to both descriptive and normative philosophy of science, and

- which will allow for the grading/stageing of linguistic research aims as required above.

Rather than basically opposing TL to AL on whatever dubious grounds (s.a.) we conceive of 'linguistics' as a discipline in which theory-formation and application constitute components of an integral entirety. This view requires that two well-cherished ideas are given up:

- TL is not any longer seen as a self-contained activity which is carried out for its own sake exclusively. Like other sciences which like to call themselves 'pure' sciences, TL will have to admit that the Archimedean point, from which 'pure' science expects to unhinge the world, actually, does not exist. 'Pure' sciences and along with them TL share in the task of demystifying the world (cf. Brunkhorst 1978) - but what should not be forgotten is the fact that both 'pure' sciences and TL are, of course, themselves part of this world. They do not operate from some distantly removed place outside. They are themselves subject to the constraints of this world, whose demystification is their task, subject to social determination - which so frequently is negated for these disciplines, and is seen as a characteristic of applied/technological disciplines only.

- As for AL, the humus-theory will have to be dismissed, which conceives of applications as mere post-festum activities, which emanate from TL in a kind of trial-and-error 'fertilizing' attempts - and which therefore have

so often failed in meeting the demands of existing language-related areas, whose problems the applications are supposed to solve.

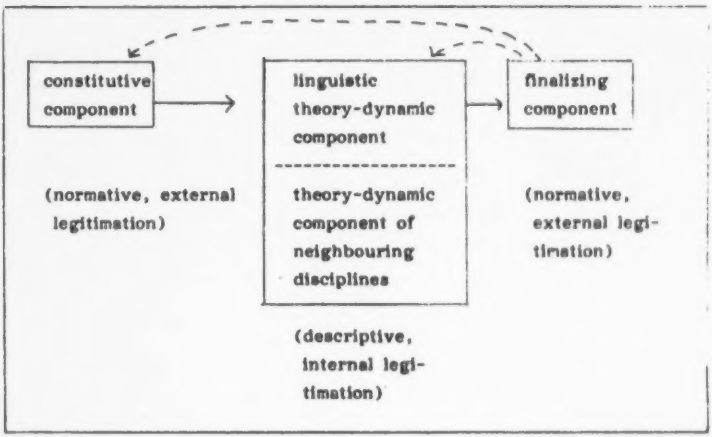

Figure 1. Proposed relationship of TL and AL in the linguistic research process.

At first sight it might be surprising that in the above system the term 'applied linguistics' does not show up, whereas linguistic theory-formation retains a central position. Nor should the term 'finalizing component' be mistaken for a mere (perhaps idiosyncratic) exchanging of labels, for a mere substitute for 'applied component'. The trichotomy of the system (for its development outside linguistics cf. Böhme et al. eds. 1978) entails a thorough-going and comprehensive change as opposed to the following traditional relationship:

(Theoretical) Linguistics vs. Applied Linguistics

Figure 2. The traditional relationship.

In the system which we propose in Figure 1, 'linguistics' is not equivalent with TL. Instead 'linguistics' comprises, among other components, TL (=linguistic theory-dynamics) as one necessary component. What is usually called the 'applied' aspect of linguistic research comes in in the two components which frame the theory-dynamic one:

- There is the constitutive component. It thematizes what is considered important enough to be investigated, and how this selection is determined - a priori problems which depend on sociopolitical-historical etc. conditions - and which thus is not legitimized language-internally but externally; in other words, the legitimation of this component is derived from the problems which society faces, from the needs of man; in other words, the justification of the constitutive component of linguistics is based on a normative, socially oriented, philosophy of science. (For a more detailed treatment, cf. Kühlwein 1987a.)

- There is the finalizing component. It also is determined normatively, it also is socially oriented. Two characteristics clearly distinguish it from the above-mentioned trial-and-error humus-theory of 'application', and it is not synonymous with 'practice' either:

  - The finalizing component is designed in such a way as to develop specialized theories for practical purposes such as understanding a foreign language, vocabulary teaching, therapy of specific speech disorders, and thousands of others.

  - Looking at the finalizing component as following general theory-dynamics does not at all reveal its entire nature. Of course, specialized (finalizing) theory-formation must be preceded by general theory-dynamics; both, however, are related to and by strength of this relation determined by the - preceding - constitutive component, the dimension of explanatory, screening pre-theoretic intuitions, knowledge, and beliefs of the researcher.

As for the theory-dynamic component of the linguistic research process, the normative determination can only bear insofar as theory-dynamics is seen from the point-of-view of its being related with the two other research phases, constitution and finalization. Regardless of this encompassing normative, externally legitimized framework, linguistic theory-

dynamics, the competition of language theories, can well proceed along a descriptive philosophy of science, ie. it can well be legitimized internally.

One should also admit that now and then applicable 'fall-out' is produced by (descriptively motivated, ie. socially unconcerned) theory-dynamics directly. That shortcuts of this kind, which tend to disregard constitutive and finalizing (normative) considerations, are not too effective, however, can be illustrated nicely by a comparison from the realm of natural science, the development of fermentation research vs. that of flow dynamics (cf. Böhme 1978). For a very long time the former was primarily determined by lasting internal controversies among rivalling theories; applicable results were meagre. The latter, aero- and hydrodynamics, on the other hand, were characterized from their outset by a strong external determination; this state of affairs led to an early development of more or less 'mature' theories and, along with them, to excellent finalization.

2.2. We return to our object of research, the grasp of language at a section of reality, 'beauty'. Among the linguistic approaches developed for tasks like this it seems evident that it is the sociosemiotic approach which complies best with the requirements set by a normative, externally legitimated philosophy of science, which takes account of human and social constraints. We shall briefly set it into relief against other (older) approaches.

- There is the approach based on (and restricted to) the conception of language as a system. As shown in Kühlwein 1987b (part 2) it yielded many valuable lexical field studies, nearly all of them - despite differences as to the underlying linguistic theories: structural ones, stratificational ones, generative ones, etc. - following the same 'paradigm' (in T.S. Kuhn's sense), being satisfied with descriptive justification. Cross-language lexical field studies were scarce, and so were endeavours to finalize.

- There is the deeper reaching approach that is based on the conception of language as knowledge and traces formal-functional-grammatical differences down to underlying conceptual strategies of mental processing of reality. Again, however, finalizing considerations were rare.

The sociosemiotic approach proposed here is based on language as behaviour. It is close to, but not equal to a pragmatic approach to cross-

language analysis. As shown in Kühlwein (1987b) cross-language pragmatic studies in the lexical area still have to cope with the problem of existence, format, and psychological reality of a pragmatic deep structure as tertium comparationis, and, after all, are rather of a descriptive than of an explanatory nature. Why?

Differences in the grasp of reality along different languages reflect deeper possibilities and contrasts on a sociocultural, anthropolinguistic, ethnolinguistic level. Each person, each object, each event, about whom/which we communicate, has a potential of semiotic properties. Members of different societies/speech-communities make differing choices from this latent semiotic potential when perceiving - and what is actualized from latency by these processes differs accordingly. There will be certain semiotic properties which might kind of impose themselves on members of one speech-community, whereas the same properties might remain completely unnoticed by members of other speech-communities. In a society where women have to do most of the physical labour the property 'bulkiness of physical stature' will acquire a high degree of semioticity (and in addition be evaluated as very beautiful). In the fifties of our century, when few Europeans only had been in a position to afford a longer seaside or mountain holiday, 'being tanned' had acquired high semioticity. On the other hand in the Middle Ages, when women had to do much outdoor work, a white (untanned) complexion was highly semiotic, struck people immediately, and got to be regarded as a major constituent of female beauty. Quite obviously, what is actualized from the semiotic impact of a person/object/event, the semiotic thrust which he/she/it exerts upon us, the different ways in which they affect our perception, determine the cross-cultural differences of semiotic profiling - which will be reflected accordingly on the linguistic plane. And as the linguistic products of these different perceptual strategies and mental processings are (at least more or less) understandable among members of the same speech-community/society, their ultimate causes cannot solely lie on a psycholinguistic level, but must necessarily be of a social origin/nature: processes of semiotization varying across societies: sociosemiotic processes. (As for the relation between this use of 'sociosemiotic' to Halliday's use of the term, cf. Kühlwein 1987b.)

The great impact of a sociosemiotic view on the constitution of one's object of research, the social, normative, external determination which it exerts, will have become apparent. What about its impact on finalization? Without doubt, a strictly descriptively, internally motivated systemically based lexicological study is legitimate for its own sake. As human beings

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we have got to ask how this world (and language as one of its features) is structured. A sociosemiotically based study, however, extends beyond this end (cf. above: Stageing/grading of aims). To reveal the determining powers - here the sociosemiotic habits, constraints, forces - behind different languages means to get a better access to differences in perception of the respective societies/speech-communities. This better access to perception can become a key to better comprehension. At this stage the various uses come into play, to which the results of a cross-language sociosemiotic analysis can be put, eg. in foreign language learning/teaching or in translating or in interpreting, etc. Facilitation of, for instance foreign language comprehension need not, however, be the 'ultimate' finalization; after all, it is an absolutely traditional and usual 'application'. Beyond this aim, better comprehension may in turn well become a key for better mutual understanding across cultures as an 'ultimate' finalization. The chain 'perception - comprehension - understanding' (for more details cf. Kühlwein 1984) might explain our emphasis on the distinction between finalization and mere application. As opposed to so many kinds of 'application' true finalization is the consequent, deliberately planned, and socially legitimized result of research which from its very start (constitutive phase!) is carried out under the auspices of a likewise social, external legitimation - methodically embodied by a sociosemiotic view in our example.

3. The lexical field 'Aesthetic Judgement'

3.0. Aims.

We investigated the lexemes for 'Beauty' (B) of human beings in English (E) and French (F). In the interest of the ultimate aim of coming to a better mutual understanding we should be able to put each actual utterance referring to B into relief against the overall inclination or disinclination towards, respectively against, attributing or expressing B at all, ie. its degree of its overall semiotic relevance/importance in different cultures/societies. Furthermore a proper understanding of an actual utterance referring to B can only be achieved on the basis of the - conscious or subconscious - knowledge about the sociosemiotic conditions that must be met to assign B to somebody in a certain culture (sociosemiotic profiling).

3.1. Tools and Procedures.
The following lexemes were considered:

F: beau, chic, coquet, élégant, épatant (inélégant) joli I ♂ (laid), mignon I ♂, pimpant I ♂, ravissant ♂

E: beautiful I ♂, chic I ♂, comely I ♂, dressy, elegant, glamorous I ♂, good-looking, gorgeous I ♂, handsome I ♀ (inelegant), lovely I ♂ (plain), pretty I o, smart (ugly), (unsightly)

(...) = antonyms; I ♀ largely incompatible with 'female'; I ♂ largely incompatible with 'male'.

The study is corpus-based. There were 563 French and 773 English informants of all age groups (mainly, however, 30-35 years; actually, the age parameter did not yield significant differences).

A set of 11 parameters was administered to the B-lexemes, eg. [+ refined features] vs. [- refined features]. The assessment for each test question (eg. opposition tests like (... not ... but ...), or (... not really ... but only ...)) for each lexeme along each parameter was done by the informants along a scale of evaluation ranging from + 2 via + 1, 0, - 1 to - 2. Altogether we had 7,360 decision making acts for French, and 11,920 for English, which then were processed according to the usual quantitative linguistic procedures (factor analysis, χ^2-tests, standard values, standard derivations, significant derivations, etc.).

The three semiotically most relevant criteria according to which B is assigned to persons in both F and E seem to be (cf. flow chart below):

- the semantic reference of aesthetic judgement: either primarily to clothing or to body (Parameters P 1 and P 2)

- aesthetic judgement itself:
  - constitution (P 3)
  - perfection (P 4)
  - harmony (P 5)

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- non-aesthetic judgement:
  - physiological preconditions:
    - age (P 6)
    - sex-typicity (P 7)

- psychological preconditions:
  - vanity (P 8)
  - warm-heartedness (P 9)

- psychosomatic impression:
  - naturalness (P 10)
  - seriousness (P 11)

For further details concerning the choice of lexemes, statistical 'machinery', and numeric data-base cf. Nies (1979); for a preliminary comparison of B in E and German cf. Fries (1982); cf. also Kühlwein (1983).

3.2. Presentation and Discussion of Results

3.2.1. The overall inclination of members of the F speech-community (France) towards attributing B is far greater than that of the E one (Great Britain). Furthermore, in both speech-communities B is attested to women considerably more frequently than to men. But the relation between explicitly and positively attributing [+ B], on the one hand, and explicitly stating the absence of B, ie. attributing [- B], on the other, equals 2 : 1 for women in Britain, whereas in France it equals 4 : 1; and the only creature that ends up with an overall dominance of [- B] is the male in Britain. The overall gradience is:

F woman (far ahead of) E woman (far ahead of) F man (somewhat ahead of) E man.

We have also got some preliminary German (G) data which also reveal a distinct predilection of + B for women as against - B, the exact figures for the G speech-community (Federal Republic) being somewhere between the E and F ones; the absolute figures for the G woman, however, are much lower than those for the F one. Futhermore, like the E man, the G man is characterized by an overall dominance of - B.

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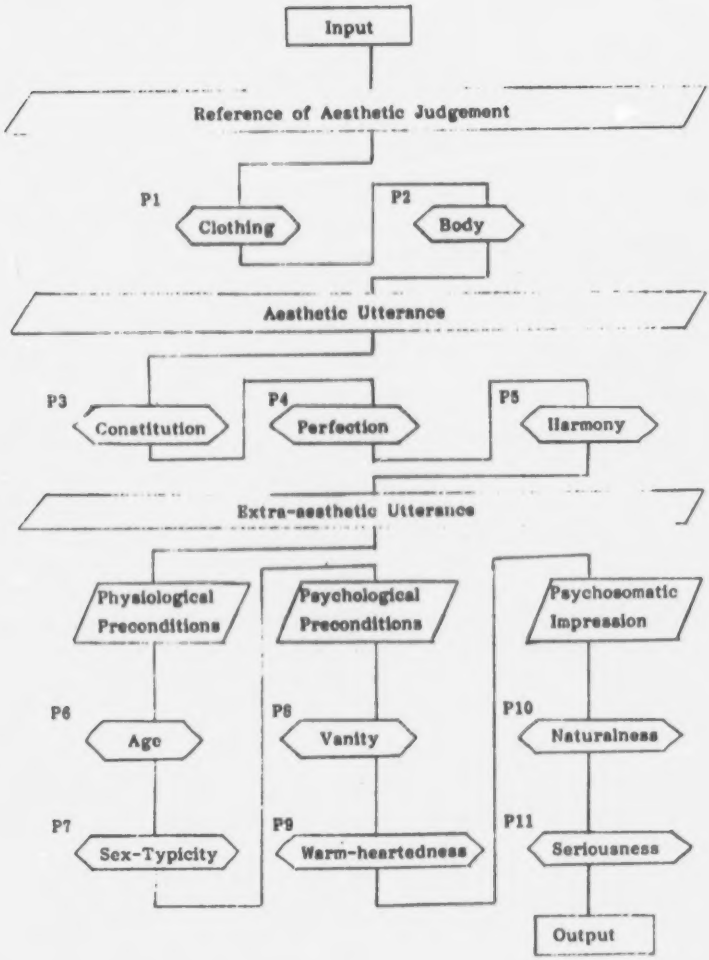

Figure 3. Flow chart.

As for the bearings on our final aim, 'better understanding', a brief inference will suffice. Quite a basic command of F will enable an E speaking person (and vice versa) to comprehend an utterance by which B is attributed to somebody or by which B is denied. But what matters beyond this simple act of comprehension, what determines the true understanding (here sociosemiotic significance) of such an utterance eg. for a F speaking person when exposed to E, is the obvious fact that the 'value' of an actual utterance by which B is attributed to a person in Britain is considerably greater than that of the corresponding F utterance in France, as the sociosemiotic thrust of B turned out to be basically greater in F than in E; the setting into relief against the basically lower level in E, on the other hand, gives more markedness to the actual utterance. Likewise in all other constellations.

3.2.2. From this 'macroscopic' look we will now turn to the 'microscopic' perspective, investigating the relevant sociosemiotic properties: parameters P 1 - P 11.

Semantic reference to clothing [$\pm$ well-dressed] vs. body $\pm$ good physical appearance (P 1/P 2)

These two parameters have to be treated together as there are - differing - mutual dependencies.

The semiotic thrust which emanates from being well-dressed can at the same time trigger the effect which is caused by good physical appearance more easily in the F speech-community than in the E one. This holds true in particular for women. Stated more simply: for women in France adjectives which per se primarily refer to a state of being well-dressed can evoke an impression of physical B more easily than their E counterparts can do. This triggering effect manifests itself in the opposite direction even more clearly with F adjectives which per se primarily refer to good physical appearance of a woman. Likewise, as for E and F men, F adjectives which primarily refer to being well-dressed can evoke an impression of good physical appearance more easily than their E counterparts can do; here, however, the difference between E and F is only slight. However, the F speech-community evinces a stronger disinclination against associating well-dressedness with adjectives that primarily refer to good physical appearance of men than is done in the E speech-community.

The obvious conclusion is that sexspecificity plays a considerably more important role for the contrast P 1 and P2 in F than it does in E.

As for the realization of this sociosemiotic contrast all F B-adjectives used for men can also be used for women, whereas joli, mignon, épatant, pimpant, ravissant are largely inappropriate to denote B for men. In E handsome is inappropriate for women, pretty, comely, glamorous, lovely to a wide extent also gorgeous and chic are inappropriate for men. As regards these two fairly clearly profiled semantic poles both languages are fairly similar. The distinctions noticed above derive from the large area of adjectives which are compatible with both male and female: chic, coquet, élégant, beau in F, and elegant, smart, good-looking, and dressy in E.

Constitution [refined vs. coarse features] (P 3)

These properties are also treated in very different ways in both cultures. In the F speech-community there is a strong tendency towards attributing such B-adjectives which primarily refer to physical B on the basis of refined features. In cases of coarse features a striking tendency is manifested in the F speech-community to attribute B-adjectives nevertheless. But the adjectives chosen in these cases mainly are those which otherwise primarily refer to clothing. In the E speech-community the difference of the semiotic impact of refined vs. coarse features on the use of such B-adjectives which primarily refer to clothing is lower; they are used with equal frequency both along with refined and along with coarse features. Moreover the E speech-community shows a stronger tendency towards attributing such B-adjectives, which primarily refer to good physical appearance, despite coarse features - 'beautiful', however, being excepted.

The thrust of the differentiation refined vs. coarse features seems to be stronger in the F society than in the E one.

Perfection [± consummate outer appearance] (P 4)

As to the relevancy of this parameter, the E and the F speech-community differ greatly, too. Perfection triggers such B-adjectives which primarily refer to the state of clothing in F much more easily than in E, where in turn perfection triggers adjectives referring to physical B slightly more easily than in F, particularly for the E male.

The risk, not to be called chic, elegant, smart despite a perfect appearance is much greater in E than in F, where élégant will probably be attri-

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buted; on the other hand, a person of less perfect appearance will hardly be called unchic or inelegant in E.

Perfection seems to be more important in F than in E for the attribution of B-adjectives which primarily refer to clothing. But the chances of being assigned B-adjectives which primarily refer to physical appearance are higher for a perfectly appearing person in E (especially for the E male) than in F.

Consequently the risk not to be called good-looking, pretty or beautiful despite a perfect appearance is much lower in E than in F for eg. beau, joli, mignon.

This tendency to relate perfection rather to physical appearance in E seems to be even stronger for the male than for the woman.

Harmony [± harmony of appearance] (P 5)

This feature turns out to be much more relevant for the conception of B in F than in E, especially as regards clothing; in E even lack of harmony can well go along with B-adjectives which primarily refer to clothing fairly easily, whereas in F lack of harmony more or less excludes B-adjectives which primarily refer to clothing; in the latter respect both F and E are somewhat more lenient with men than with women.

Obviously lack of harmony of appearance is more striking to members of the F speech-community than to those of the E speech-community.

Age [± looking one's age (mid-age)] (P 6)

This parameter also reveals fairly clear distinctions. Whereas the F speech-community is fairly generous in assigning B-adjectives (in particular such ones which primarily refer to clothing - politeness!) to women who look their age, the E spech-community tends to be rather harsh towards women who try to look younger than they are.

The F man - especially if he does not look his age - is treated more harshly than the respective F women, but still more leniently than the respective E man, who in turn is treated slightly more leniently than the E

woman. Altogether in this respect F is rather generous to the woman, E being somewhat more lenient with the man.

Sexually typical appearance [± feminine/masculine looking] (P 7)

As one will have expected, this parameter has high semiotic power in both speech-communities: no B-adjectives if no sex-typicity of women in both E and F; for men: a distinctly male appearance easily evokes such B-adjectives which primarily refer to good physical appearance in both E and F; there is only a slight evocation of such adjectives which primarily refer to clothing as far as E men are concerned; for the F woman, however, this feature can evoke such primarily clothing-oriented adjectives fairly easily.

Vanity [± the intention to impress by a good appearance] (P 8)

This parameter mainly affects those B-adjectives which primarily refer to clothing. Being fairly relevant for the F woman and - somewhat less - for the F man, it is next to irrelevant for both woman and man in the E speech-community.

Warm-heartedness [± amiable, warm-hearted, friendly] (P 9)

On the whole the F speech-community reacts somewhat stronger towards this parameter; it has a slightly positive effect on evoking such F adjectives which mainly refer to good physical appearance.

Naturalness [± natural, unassuming vs. well-groomed, cultivated] (P 10)

What is striking here is the observation that the F speech-community seems to react more sensitively towards both natural and cultivated appearance: B-adjectives which primarily refer to good physical appearance are triggered both by natural and by cultivated appearance very easily for the F woman; for the F man, E women and men, these adjectives are more easily compatible with [+ cultivated] than with [+ natural], but the respective correlations are weaker than for the F woman. Furthermore in F there is a strong correlation of cultivated appearance with such B-adjectives which primarily refer to clothing, especially with women.

Seriousness [± serious, earnest vs. cheerful, serene] (P 11)

The significance of this feature for the evocation of B-adjectives is rather low in both speech-communities. What can be seen most clearly is the influence of [+ cheerful, serene] on the evocation of such B-adjectives which primarily refer to good physical appearance for the woman in the F speech-community.

3.2.3. A cross-language comparison of the relative relevancy of these sociosemiotic properties should take into account the following distinction:

- adjectives that go with both male and female
- adjectives which are completely or at least highly incompatible with one of the sexes.

Now we can set up a separate hierarchical list for each of these two groups of adjectives, showing the relative power of the various sociosemiotic properties as to the evocation of B-adjectives (see Figure 4).

A somewhat detailed comparative discussion concerning the major differences and similarities across languages is given in Kühlwein 1983 (14 ff.). Without going into the manifold details here we can infer from the criterial list as given by figure 4:

As for the attribution of B-adjectives marked as compatible with both male and female, the F speech-community allows for a far wider scope of both aesthetic and extra-aesthetic (physiological, psychological, psychosomatic) judgements, when women are concerned. Within the E speech-community the spectrum of properties which can evoke this group of B-adjectives is even somewhat broader for the man than for the woman. In the E speech-community the attribution of these B-adjectives seems to follow a more clearly profiled image of the woman, whereas in the F speech-community it seems to be much more strongly oriented according to the specific person concerned, as can especially be seen from the occasional admittance of absolutely contrary properties.

As for the attribution of B-adjectives marked as (highly) incompatible with either male or female, psychosomatic properties (like naturalness, seriousness/cheerfulness) matter much more in the case of women in the F

Rank	F compatible ♀	F compatible ♂	E compatible ♀	E compatible ♂	F (highly) incompatible with o ♀	F (highly) incompatible with o ♂	E (highly) incompatible with o ♀	E (highly) incompatible with o ♂
1	+cloth.	+cloth.	+cloth.	-sex typ.	+sex typ.	+natural	+perf.	-sex typ.
2	-natural	-natural	+l.o.age	-natural	+refined features	+refined features	+sex typ.	+phys.app.
3	+vanity	+perf.	+vanity	+cloth.	+cloth.	-sex typ.	+cloth.	+refined features
4	-harmony	+vanity	-natural	+perf.	+harmony	-natural	+vanity	+perf.
5	+natural	+harmony	+perf.	+vanity	+phys.app.	+perf.	+phys.app.	+vanity
6	+perf.	-refined features	+phys.app.	+l.o.age	-serious	-serious	+refined features	+harmony
7	+l.o.age	+l.o.age	-refined features	-vanity	+perf.	+phys.app.	+l.o.age	-natural
8	+harmony	-vanity	refined features	+phys.app.	-natural	+harmony	-natural	+l.o.age
9	-warm-hearted	-sex typ.	+sex typ.	+refined features	+vanity	+vanity	-vanity	+clothing
10	-l.o.age	+phys.app.	-vanity	-perf.	-refined features	-l.o.age	+natural	-vanity
11	+serious	-l.o.age	-perf.	-harmony	+natural	-harmony	+harmony	+sex typ.
12	-perf.	-serious	-harmony	+sex typ.	-vanity	+cloth.	-l.o.age	-refined features
13	+sex typ.	-perf.	-l.o.age	+harmony	+warm-hearted	-vanity	-perf.	-serious
14	-refined features	-harmony	+harmony	+natural	-perf.	+warm-hearted	+warm-hearted	+warm-hearted
15	-vanity	+natural	+natural	-l.o.age	+l.o.age	-perf.	-refined features	-warm hearted
16	+phys.app.	+warm-hearted	+warm-hearted	-refined features	-l.o.age	-refined features	-harmony	-perf.
17	-serious	+serious	+serious	+warm-hearted	-harmony	+serious	-serious	-harmony
18	+warm-hearted	-warm-hearted	-serious	-serious	+serious	+sex typ.	+serious	+natural
19	+refined features	+refined features	-warm-hearted	+serious	-warm-hearted	-warm-hearted	-warm-hearted	+serious
20	-sex typ.	+sex typ.	-sex typ.	-warm-hearted	-sex typ.	+l.o.age	-cloth.	-l.o.age
21	-phys.app.	-phys.app.	-cloth.	-cloth.	-cloth.	-cloth.	-sex typ.	-cloth.
22	-cloth.	-cloth	-phys.app.	-phys.app.	-phys.app.	-phys.app.	-phys.app.	-phys.app.
	beau, chic, coquet, élégant, épatant		dressy, elegant, good-looking smart handsome excluded		joli, mignon, pimpant, ravissant		beautiful, chic, comely, glamorous, gorgeous, lovely, pretty	

(——= borderline of positve scoring)

Figure 4. Overall hilrarchy of sociosemiotic properties as to the evocation of B-adjectives

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speech-community than in the case of women in the E one. As for men aesthetic properties (constitution, perfection, harmony) can cause the assignment of this group of adjectives more easily in the F speech-community than in the E one, and even more easily than for the woman in the E speech-community.

3.2.4. Cross-language studies have been wrestling with all kinds of equivalences with more or less success: formal ones, derivational-semantic ones, paraphrases, translational ones, functional-communicative ones. What can definitely be concluded from our study is the certainty that there is no such thing as 'sociosemiotic equivalence' either. This insight will serve as a sociosemiotic safeguard against false friends like 'elle est très chic/élégante vs. she is quite chic/elegant.' But, what is more important, it will make us look out for the peculiarities of sociosemiotic profiling in a different culture before assessing an utterance in the respective foreign language. What might be a sociosemiotic norm in one culture/language can easily turn out to be sociosemiotically marked or deviant in another culture/language - despite formal, functional or any other equivalences or pseudo-equivalences.

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